

REMARKS:

In the foregoing amendments, editorial amendments were made to claims 1, 3, and 5 and new claims 6-9 were added to the application. Claims 1-9 are in the application for consideration by the examiner. In the Office action mailed September 15, 2004, claim 3 was not rejected over prior art. The Official action objected to this claim as containing allowable subject matter, and stated that this claim would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In the present claims, claim 3 is rewritten as an independent claim including all the limitations of original claim 1 from which it depended. For these reasons, a formal allowance of claim 3 and new claim 8, which depends thereon, is respectfully requested.

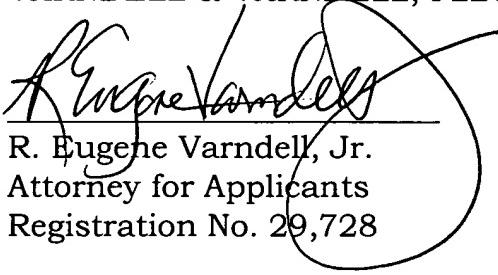
The aforesaid Official action set forth a rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by JP 9-126084 of Umemoto. Claim 1 was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. patent No. 6,278,032 of Ruoff *et al.* (Ruoff) in view of Umemoto. Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ruoff in view of Umemoto and in further view of U.S. patent No. 6,637,381 of Stanglmaier *et al.* (Stanglmaier). Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1, 2, 4-7, and 9 are patently distinguishable from the teachings of Ruoff, Umemoto and/or Stanglmaier within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §102 or 35 U.S.C. §103 for the

reasons set forth in the response filed on January 18, 2005, which is incorporated herein by reference.

The Notice of Allowance and Fee(s) Due mailed April 6, 2005, allowed claims 1-6. For all the reasons, a formal allowance of claims 1-9 is respectfully requested. While it is believed that all the claims in this application are in condition for allowance, should the examiner have any comments or questions, it is respectfully requested that the undersigned be telephoned at the below listed number to resolve any outstanding issues.

In the event this paper is not timely filed, applicant hereby petitions for an appropriate extension of time. The fee therefor, as well as any other fees which may become due, may be charged to our deposit account No. 22-0256.

Respectfully submitted,
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